

Music and Theater Arts

Music and Theater Arts continues to afford students at MIT the opportunity to experience the unique language and process of the arts. Faculty and teaching staff help students understand art's demand for rigor and discipline and its nonquantitative standards of excellence and beauty. A strong, comprehensive program in both music and theater arts—encompassing history, theory, and performance and taught by faculty and staff of the highest caliber, whose ongoing professional activities inform their teaching—has been and will continue to be our hallmark. Because it is comprehensive, the academic program continues to produce graduates who have the talent and desire to extend their education in music or theater beyond the undergraduate level.

Highlights of the Year

Institute professor John Harbison's 70th birthday was celebrated with a concert featuring the premiere of his *French Horn Suite*, performed by lecturer Jean Rife. Other works presented included the viola quartet *Cucaraccia and Fugue*, performed by Professor Harbison, professor Marcus Thompson, James Dunham, and Ivo-Jan van der Werff; the Boston premiere of *Crane Sightings*, performed by violinist Rose Mary Harbison; and *Umbrian Landscape with Saint*, performed by the MIT Chamber Chorus under the direction of lecturer William Cutter.

The MIT Guest Artist series presented performances by the Calder Quartet, the Cardenes-Williams-Deveau Piano Trio, and the New Century Saxophone Quartet. The faculty performance series presented lecturer Mark Harvey and the Aardvark Jazz Orchestra with guest conductor William Thompson. Iva Bittová, legendary Czech composer, vocalist and violinist presented a concert with professor Evan Ziporyn and bassist Robert Black.

Sponsored by Music and Theater Arts, composer/guitarist Bryce Dessner was in residence and joined forces with visual artist Matthew Ritchie to present performances that blurred the line between indie-rock, ambient music, contemporary classical music, and installation art.

Associate professor Patricia Tang presented the MIT Griot Festival celebrating the musical traditions of Africa and the diaspora with special guests the Mbaye Family Drum Troupe from Senegal. They appeared in a special performance with Professor Tang's Senegalese drumming ensemble, Rambax, directed by lecturer Lamine Touré.

The *Making of Americans* (book and direction by associate professor Jay Scheib, adapted from Gertrude Stein's novel) was prototyped with students and professionals at MIT. Conceived as a cross-media chamber opera, the production was presented at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis where reviewers hailed the performance and particularly pointed out fine performances from the MIT undergraduates.

Visiting artist John Bell directed a play devised about Paul Farmer's work in Haiti. The play was a mix of puppetry, live action, narration and dance and involved the Cambridge Haitian community, Partners in Health and numerous Cambridge artists.

Honors and Awards

Assistant professor Keeril Makan was awarded the American Academy Rome Prize for 2008–2009.

Assistant professor Michael Cuthbert received a \$100,000 grant from the Seaver Institute for his research project “music21: a Computer-aided Framework for Musical Analysis.”

Lecturer Laura Harrington and senior lecturer Martin Marks received the Levitan Award for excellence in teaching.

Program Highlights

Enrollments in Music and Theater Arts were 1,149 and 362, respectively, for a total of 1,511. Music and Theater Arts continued to host the MIT Chapel Series, a successful concert series featuring local solo and group performers.

The 90th birthday year of Leonard Bernstein was celebrated during the annual Family Weekend concert. The MIT Wind Ensemble and Jazz Ensemble, joined by the MIT Symphony Orchestra, performed under the direction of lecturers Frederick Harris and Adam Boyles.

The tenth anniversary of the founding of the MIT Wind Ensemble was celebrated in a special program that included traditional wind ensemble repertoire and new music composed for the ensemble, along with performances by student soloists, visiting performers, and the MIT Concert Choir, with whom the Wind Ensemble has frequently collaborated. The performance was directed by Lecturers Harris and Cutter.

Professors Thomas DeFrantz from Music and Theater Arts and Ian Condry from Foreign Languages and Literatures collaborated on a production bringing anime to life. *Live Action Anime 2009: Madness at Mokuba* was developed with MIT’s Dance Theater Ensemble and performed at Anime Boston. The troupe then took the show to Japan where they collaborated with Japanese students to perform the play at Tokyo University of the Arts.

Dramashop presented Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, directed by senior lecturer Michael Ouellette. The Cambridge American Stage Tour presented Shakespeare’s *Henry V* in a special production sponsored by Dramashop and Music and Theater Arts.

Theater Arts sponsored a workshop production of Samuel Beckett’s *Not I*. The production was taken on tour to Hungary.

Music and Theater Arts’ Dance Theater Ensemble presented Neta Pulvermacher in *To Fold a Big Bang*, a theatrical exploration of both the macro and the micro possible meanings of collisions (meetings) in movement-based work. Dance Theater Ensemble also presented *Third Life*, a site-specific performance created by visiting artist Elise Knudson.

Playwrights in Performance, which allows young playwrights the opportunity to follow their scripts through the production process, presented four new plays by MIT students.

Achievements

Professor Alan Brody's play *The Housewives of Mannheim* was given its world premiere by the New Jersey Repertory Company. He was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for the play. A staged reading of his play *Operation Epsilon* was performed at the Central Square Theater in Cambridge and at MIT. The Publick Theater performed a reading of his play *Jacob and the Stranger* for the Boston Theater Marathon series.

Professor Peter Child continued his Music Alive residency with the Albany Symphony. He was composer-in-residence with the New England Philharmonic through 2008. Boston Musica Viva premiered *Rilke Songs*. The New England Philharmonic premiered *Louisa's War* for orchestra, women's chorus, and narrator.

Professor DeFrantz published a book review for *The Performance Arts in Africa: A Reader* edited by Frances Harding in the *Dance Research Journal*. He presented the paper "Hip Hop Habitus: v.1" at the American Society for Theater Research conference in Boston, and the paper "Celebrating the Black Tradition in American Dance: Richard Long" at the Society of Dance History Scholars conference at Skidmore College. He lectured at the Charles Davis memorial lecture at the University of California, Davis, and at the World Performance Project at Yale University. He was visiting professor in theater studies and African American studies at Yale University.

Professor Harbison saw premieres of a number of new compositions including *A Clear Midnight* with the Indiana University Pro Arte Singers, *Mary Lou* with the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony and the *French Horn Suite*. The *Piano Quintet* received its New York City premiere with the Orion Quartet and Gilbert Kalish, piano. New recordings include *Christmas Vespers* with the Motor City Brass Quintet on the Brassjar Music label, *First Four String Quartets* on the Centaur label performed by the Lydian Quartet and *Music of John Harbison Volume 2* on Bridge Records. He is acting artistic director of Emmanuel Music in Boston, co-artistic director of the Token Creek Chamber Music Festival and continues as president of the Copland Fund.

Professor Ellen Harris published the article "Joseph Goupy and George Frideric Handel: From Professional Triumphs to Personal Estrangement" in the *Huntington Library Quarterly*. The article "Handel and his Will" was commissioned and published by the Gerald Coke Handel Foundation. She presented the 2009 Hopkins-McGuinness lecture "Music in Society: How Handel's Audience heard his Operas" at the University of California, Davis. She read her essay "Handel and his Friends" on the BBC program "The Essay." She presented a lecture at Lincoln Center in New York City before the performance of Handel's *Athalia* as part of the Great Performances series.

Professor Lowell Lindgren published a chapter on Bononcini in *Aspects of the Secular Cantata in Late Baroque Italy*, edited by Michael Talbot. He edited *Accounting for Cantatas*, by Colin Timms. He was a member of the advisory board for *Recercare*, the journal for the study and practice of early music. He was a member of the board of directors of the American Handel Society.

Professor Janet Sonenberg continues as a consultant to the Royal Shakespeare Company. In collaboration with playwright Adriano Shaplin and Literature professor Diana Henderson *The Tragedy of Thomas Hobbes*, written by Shaplin and developed in workshops with professors Sonenberg and Henderson, was premiered by the Royal Shakespeare Company in London.

Professor Thompson performed at the Sitka Summer Music Festival in Anchorage, the Montreal Chamber Music Festival, and the Rockport Chamber Music Festival. He was chosen as the new artistic director for the Boston Chamber Music Society.

Professor Ziporyn saw the premiere of his opera *A House in Bali* in the village of Ubud, Bali. The opera combines Balinese and western musical forms and is based on a memoir of the same title. He curated the Beeline Festival of New Music in Cambridge that presented a genre-busting range of performances at the Broad Institute at MIT.

Professor Tang published the article “‘Il y a des gens courageus parmi vous’: Griots Wolof, la Lutte, et les Héros du 21ème siècle” in the edited volume *Communication et Société Wolof: Héritage et Création*. She was an invited speaker for the Lamont School of Music Colloquium Series at the University of Denver where she presented “Tradition and Innovation in Senegalese Drumming”. She was a panel chair for “Drumming” at the Society for Ethnomusicology annual meeting in Middletown, CT.

Professor Scheib’s recent multi-media performance work *Addicted to Bad Ideas* was presented at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, the Luminato Festival in Toronto and the Helsinki Festival in Finland.

Professor Cuthbert’s article “A New Trecento Source of a French Ballade” appeared in the *Harvard Library Bulletin*. He presented the paper “Palimpsests in Perspective” at the American Academy in Rome. He gave lectures at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro and the American Musicological Society meeting in Nashville, TN, and was a guest professor at the University of Rome in Italy.

Professor Makan received grants from the Rockefeller Foundation New York City Cultural Innovation Fund and the American Music Center’s Composers Assistance Program. TimeTable Percussion recorded his composition *Gather* for Carrier Records. New works include *After Forgetting*, commissioned by California EAR Unit through Meet the Composer Commissioning Music USA; *Dream Lightly*, commissioned by the American Composers Orchestra; and *Three Surreal Shorts*, commissioned by Premiere Commissions. Performances of recent compositions included *Afterglow* and *Resonance Alloy* in Rome, Italy; *Washed by Fire* in Berlin, Germany; *Zones d’accord* in Viitasaari, Finland and New York, NY; *The Noise Between Thoughts* in Helsinki, Finland and Berlin, Germany; and *Mercury Songbirds* in Fresno, CA.

Senior lecturer Marks was commissioned by Kino International Company to compose a new score for *The Avenging Conscience*, directed by D.W. Griffith. The score was included in a new DVD edition of the film released in the fall of 2008. He performed live accompaniment for the silent films *Phantom of the Opera* and *Flesh and the Devil* at

the Coolidge Corner Theater in Brookline, MA. He prepared and performed music for a lecture and show about rare 19th century lanternslides at the Harvard Film Archive.

Senior lecturer Ouellette performed in a reading of Professor Brody's *Operation Epsilon* at the Catalyst Collaborative. He wrote the libretto for Professor Child's *Louisa's War*, performed by the New England Philharmonic.

Senior lecturer George Ruckert presented a series of performances with his group Heritage of the Arts of Southasia featuring Indian music and dance.

Senior lecturer Pamela Wood continued as a faculty member at the Kodaly Music Institute at the New England Conservatory for its summer program, and she is a member of the board of trustees of the Kodaly Center of America. She was a clinician on "How to Prepare for Auditions" as part of the Vocal Vacation Chamber Chorus at the New England Conservatory.

Lecturer Harvey performed at the Rockport Chamber Music Festival and the Festival of New Trumpet Music in New York, NY. He performed the national anthem for solo trumpet for a game at Fenway Park. He was co-chair of the Jazz Week jazz festival in Boston.

Lecturer Rife taught a special class at the Barry Tuckwell Institute during the summer of 2008. She commissioned and premiered Professor Harbison's *French Horn Suite* at his 70th birthday celebration.

Lecturer Elena Ruehr saw the release of her CD *Jane Wang considers the dragonfly and other music by Elena Ruehr* on Albany Records. Boston Modern Orchestra Project premiered *Prelude Variations* and *Red* was performed at the New Gallery concert series in Boston. She received commissions for her fifth string quartet and a violin and piano sonata.

Personnel

Keiril Makan was appointed associate professor without tenure effective July 1, 2009. Charles Shadle was appointed senior lecturer effective July 1, 2008. The Section's 13 faculty members include three women and two African Americans. The nine-member, full-time teaching staff includes one African American woman and one Native American.

Janet Sonenberg

Section Head

Professor of Theater Arts

More information about Music and Theater Arts can be found at <http://mit.edu/mta/www/>.